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Pinapatnubayan ng Marxism-Leninismo-Maoismo

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## Editorial

# Prepare for a decisive confrontation with the Arroyo regime

Gloria Arroyo's desperation knows no bounds in the face of renewed threats to her stay in power. She is haunted by seemingly endless exposés of her involvement in various anomalies, by the people's mounting anger, growing threats from the opposition and deepening rifts within the ruling coalition.

The unrelenting political crisis is shaking Arroyo's rule to its very foundations, making the end of her regime a looming possibility and foreshadowing her plans to stay in power beyond 2010.

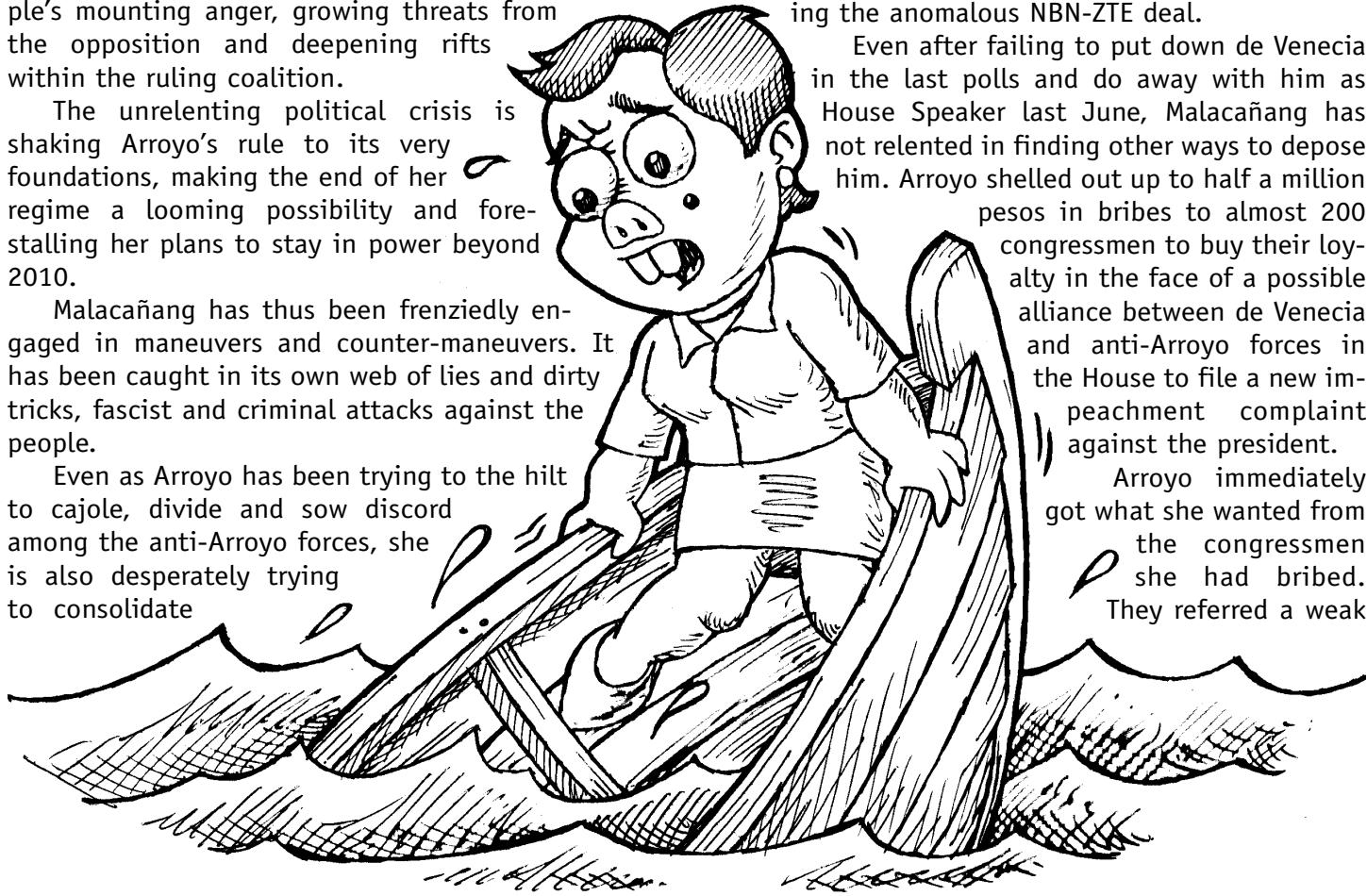
Malacañang has thus been frenziedly engaged in maneuvers and counter-maneuvers. It has been caught in its own web of lies and dirty tricks, fascist and criminal attacks against the people.

Even as Arroyo has been trying to the hilt to cajole, divide and sow discord among the anti-Arroyo forces, she is also desperately trying to consolidate

her own forces and make sure that no one within her own camp will stand in her way. She is currently occupied with maneuvering against Speaker Jose de Venecia because of the role he played in exposing the anomalous NBN-ZTE deal.

Even after failing to put down de Venecia in the last polls and do away with him as House Speaker last June, Malacañang has not relented in finding other ways to depose him. Arroyo shelled out up to half a million pesos in bribes to almost 200 congressmen to buy their loyalty in the face of a possible alliance between de Venecia and anti-Arroyo forces in the House to file a new impeachment complaint against the president.

Arroyo immediately got what she wanted from the congressmen she had bribed. They referred a weak



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impeachment case to the Congress Committee on Justice without much ado to derail opposition plans to file a genuine and airtight case.

Plans by Arroyo allies to unseat the Speaker are on hold amid worrying threats that de Venecia will side with the opposition in pushing for an impeachment. Malacañang makes it appear that the Arroyo-de Venecia rift is now a thing of the past. In fact, it is a ticking time bomb, ready to go off at a moment's notice.

The Palace's blatant bribery has incensed the public even more, worsened the rift between Arroyo and de Venecia, given the opposition more ammunition and bolstered calls to boot Arroyo out of Malacañang.

Rattled by the crisis that has exploded, the regime tried to drown out the scandals hounding it by setting off a bomb at the Glorietta Mall in Makati and use it as a pretext to suppress anticipated protests.

But the blood of the defenseless people who were killed and injured in the bombing failed to blind a public already convinced of

the fact that only the Arroyo regime is capable of perpetrating such a heinous crime.

At first, the regime blamed the bombing on "destabilizers." Now it is pushing the theory that it was an accidental explosion due to negligence by Glorietta's owners, even after the discovery of evidence pointing to the military as the source of the bomb.

Malacañang has also speeded up the granting of pardon to Joseph Estrada in a bid to divide and weaken

the opposition and derail or temporarily thwart the latter's moves against the regime.

Despite the pardon, no one in the opposition has expressed plans to stop assailing the Arroyo regime. Instead, the opposition, including the Estrada camp, is feverishly preparing for a decisive confrontation. Plans are currently underway to acquire the necessary

numbers within Congress to push a genuine impeachment case.

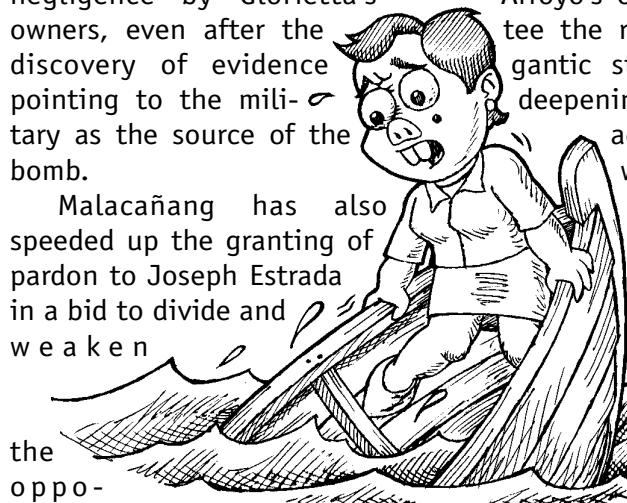
The mass movement to oust Arroyo is likewise resurgent and growing. The depth and intensity of the people's loathing for the regime, and mounting demands for Arroyo's ouster practically guarantee the renewed explosion of gigantic street protests. They are deepening the rifts within the reactionary camp and even within the ruling clique. They give the opposition renewed confidence to pursue not only Arroyo's impeachment but all other moves to change the regime and hold it accountable for its crimes against the people.

A decisive battle looms between Arroyo and the Filipino people.

The current situation presents tremendous challenges for the revolutionary forces, the mass movement and united front. All forces must act swiftly and in their numbers to massively, quickly and assiduously arouse the people, harness their anger and bring them to the streets and create a thunderous movement to oust this burdensome regime. The national-democratic forces must likewise make sure of engaging in solid, painstaking organizing which is crucial to ensuring a strong foundation for the mass movement, providing it with a clear direction and assuring that it would serve the all-sided advance of the Philippine revolution.

We must effectively lead the people. We must mobilize them in their numbers in the streets. We must take advantage of the deepening rifts within the ruling class and further expand the united front to put an end to the Arroyo regime.

AB



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# The Arroyo couple are directly involved in the NBN-ZTE deal

Speaker Jose de Venecia's son Jose "Joey" de Venecia III has disclosed that the president's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo was set to receive \$70 million (more than ₱3 billion) from the stymied National Broadband Network (NBN) project. The younger de Venecia made the disclosure before an ongoing Senate investigation on October 24, naming Mike Arroyo's close friend, big businessman Enrique Razon Jr. as the source of his information.

Joey de Venecia also revealed that after he exposed the involvement of the president's husband in the scandal, Gloria Arroyo shouted at his father during an affair held at the house of Endica Aboitiz, another friend of the Arroyos.

The younger de Venecia also exposed an alleged assassination attempt against him and his father hatched by three former generals—DOTC chief Leandro Mendoza, Reynaldo Berroya and Ricardo Dapat—using hired killers. The information reportedly came from retired Philippine Army chief Gen. Jimmy de los Santos, a close friend of the de Venecia family, and was coursing through the Speaker's lawyer Atty. Raul Lambino. AB

## Arroyo metes self-serving pardon to Estrada

A month had barely passed since Joseph Estrada was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment, when Gloria Arroyo granted him pardon. Estrada was freed on October 26 after six years of house arrest at his rest house in Tanay, Rizal.

The pardon was granted on condition that Estrada comply with the court's order to return his ill-gotten properties and a promise that he would no longer run for any position in government. But Estrada immediately made it apparent that he had no intention of fulfilling these conditions.

The maneuver was a self-serving move by Malacañang to save itself from serious crisis. Among those who assailed the hasty grant of pardon were the senators who prosecuted Estrada at his impeachment trial and state prosecutors at the Sandiganbayan where he was tried for plunder. Also up in arms against the pardon are the No Pardon for Erap Movement (NOPE), an alliance of lawyers and progressive organizations; the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN); and the Bayan Muna and Gabriela parties, among others. AB

## A bunch of liars

The League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) has claimed responsibility for giving cash to governors who had been called to a meeting in Malacañang. This belated statement—given two weeks after all the finger-pointing and disclaimers issued on the brazen bribery—serves no other purpose than to save Arroyo from accountability.

Gloria Arroyo's minions have been dishing out all sorts of contradictory statements. The LPP initially claimed that not one of its members received any money. Its latest admission has all the more convinced the people that Malacañang is behind the bribery.

In fact, the LPP's admission raises more questions than answers. For one, why was the cash-giving done in Malacañang and not at the LPP office? And why did the congressmen who had been called to an earlier meeting at the Palace receive identical paper bags full of money?

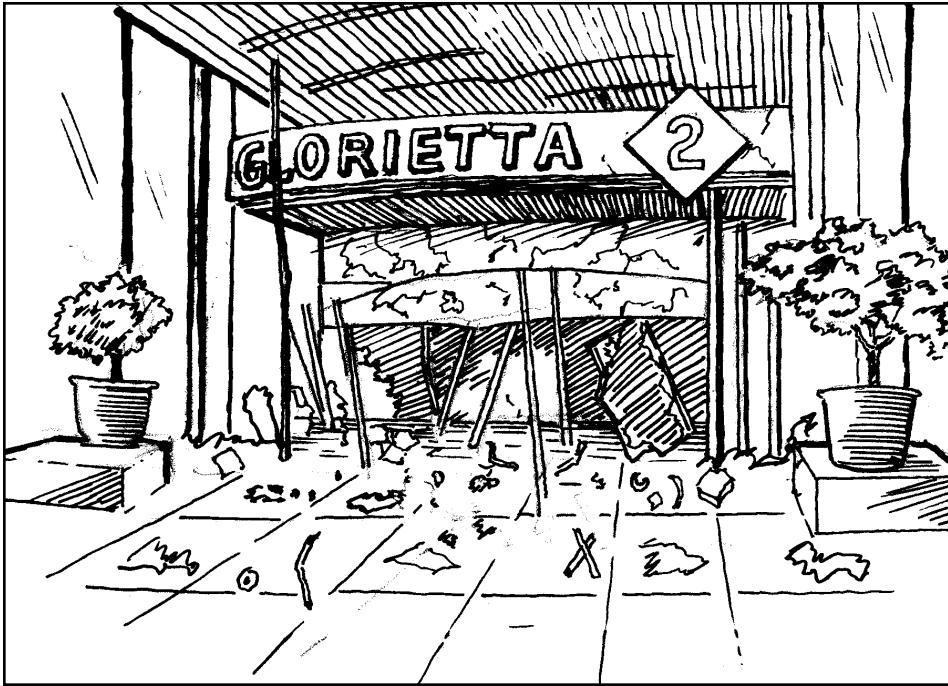
Seven former governors have said that it came as a surprise to them to learn that LPP had that much in funds. Compounding this, the LPP failed to show any receipts for the "assistance" they had allegedly given to newly elected governors as a "confidence-building measure."

Malacañang has also been hard put fending off disclosures by Gov. Jonjon Mendoza of Bulacan that the cash-giving took place inside a room at the Palace, and that it happened in the presence of Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Austere Panadero and Edward Plaza, an official of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp (Pagcor).

Meanwhile, Arroyo's party Kampi has claimed responsibility for doling out cash to the congressmen called to the Palace. The admission was made by House Deputy Speaker and Kampi leader Ma. Amelita Villarosa a month after the bribery scandal was exposed. The cash was supposed to be financial assistance to Kampi congressmen. Villarosa, however, could not explain why Kampi also gave "assistance" to Lakas congressmen.

Gloria Arroyo also allegedly knew about Kampi's plans. This therefore raises the question of why Arroyo even bothered to order an investigation of the cash-giving incident.

Kampi chair, DILG secretary and Arroyo political adviser Ronaldo Puno was also reportedly aware of everything. AB



## The Arroyo regime's coverup of the Glorietta bombing

The testimony of a witness and the simultaneous release of the findings of foreign experts commissioned to look into the Glorietta 2 blast have boosted views that it was the Arroyo regime that masterminded the October 19 mall bombing in Makati City.

The witness, Ronald Ramos alias Abdul Rachman, identified himself as a member of a special operations group under National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales from 2004 to 2006. Ramos said that among the other members of the group were elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-National Capital Region Command. He further claimed that one of his duties was to monitor certain shopping malls in Metro Manila, among them Glorietta. "I looked into Glorietta's security, and I said in my report that it had the laxest security." He reportedly recommended the best areas at Glorietta to leave a bomb.

Ramos is convinced that his surveillance work had something to do with the Glorietta bombing. He is willing to face a Senate investi-

gation to divulge what he knows.

Ramos is one of three witnesses Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV said he would present to the public in due time.

The explosion claimed the lives of 11 people and wounded 120 others.

It was also Trillanes and the other soldiers who had joined the mutiny at the Oakwood Hotel in Makati in June 2003 who had earlier disclosed the role played by then Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, ISAFP chief Victor Corpus and AFP chief Hermogenes Esperon in "Oplan Greenbase." "Oplan Greenbase" was the codename given by the security and military units that set off bombs at the Davao City airport and seaport in March and April 2003. The bombings were then blamed on the Mo-

ro Islamic Liberation Front in a bid to make it appear that the latter was conniving with the Abu Sayyaf to sow terror.

Meantime, bomb experts commissioned by Glorietta 2 owner Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) have belied the theories pushed by the Philippine National Police (PNP) that the blast was caused by the ignition of a methane gas and diesel buildup. They said the explosion was so powerful that it bent steel, threw off several vehicles parked at a nearby delivery area and elevated the Glorietta 2 structure by as much as 14 meters. The experts said it was not possible for a simple methane-diesel explosion to cause such a powerful blast.

After Malacañang adhered with the PNP chemical explosion theory, the police began insinuating that ALI could be prosecuted for negligence. Pinning the blame on ALI serves to cover up the fact that it was the Arroyo regime that masterminded the bombing to come up with a pretext to impose emergency rule or martial law. It will be recalled that a series of bombings served as pretext for Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial rule in 1972.

When no one bought Malacañang's tale that the bombing was the handiwork of the "Raha Solaiman Movement," it ordered the PNP and connived with foreign investigators from the US, Australia and Israel to push the methane-diesel explosion theory. This, despite the discovery at the bomb site of RDX, an ingredient in making C4 explosives to which only the military has access. The local police has refrained from elaborating on the RDX it found at the bomb site. A gag order has also been placed on Maj. Allan Sollano, the police officer who found the traces of RDX and submitted it to the PNP. AB

# Plummeting incomes

The Arroyo regime has been relentlessly and brazenly lying about development and poverty statistics. It recently ordered the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to amplify data on family income in the Philippines to show that the majority of the people are rising from poverty. This contradicts the results of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) for 2003 and 2006 prepared by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The FIES is a survey of incomes earned by employed Filipinos. It aims to find out expenditure patterns—what products and services Filipino families spend on and what they choose to skimp on. It is also the official basis for measuring poverty incidence and inequality.

NSO analyses have revealed that Filipinos' average annual income fell by 2.7% based on real peso values. From ₱148,000 in 2003, it fell to ₱144,000 in 2006. One indication of reduced income among Filipinos is the greater proportion spent on food. The NSO said that during hard times, many families skimp on or even totally do away with many other basic needs and services.

There is also a widening gap between the wealthiest and poorest Filipinos. In 2003, the combined income of the wealthiest 10% was 20 times bigger than that of the poorest 10%. Based on the 2006 FIES, the 30% poorest Filipino families subsist on only 8.6% of total income. On the other hand, 36% of the national income ends up in the hands of the wealthiest 10%. According to *Forbes Asia*, the combined income of the 40 wealthiest Filipinos amounts to ₱773.5 billion. This is equivalent to the income of 60% of the population or 52 million Filipinos. A comparison of FIES data in 2003 and 2006 would show that poverty incidence rose from 82% to 86% in the last three years.

The NSO has cited that the incomes of the poorest Filipinos rose

by an average of 17.5% while that of the middle and upper strata rose by an average of only 15.9%. The difference is insignificant, and even more useless given the great disparity between the incomes of the richest and poorest Filipinos. One economist has even said that an increase in income does not necessarily translate to a rise in the real value of such income. Considering the rising costs of goods and services, the overall incomes of Filipinos today are much smaller than they were in 2003.

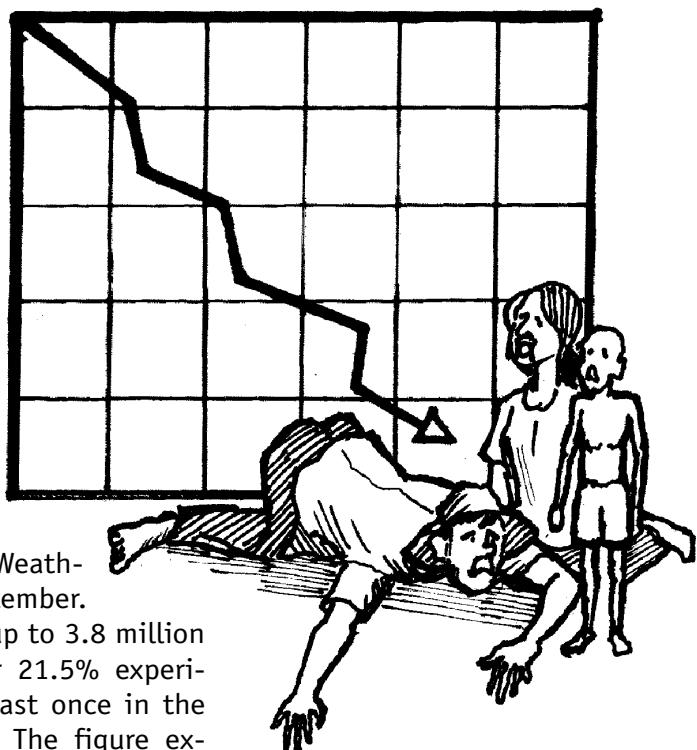
The regime hopes that NEDA's pronouncements would silence critics who have been assailing the government's statistical deceptions. Many sectors, including many critical economists, doubt the development data being issued by the government, particularly the so-called GNP growth rate in the second quarter of 2007.

The regime has also sought to cover up the widespread hunger and poverty underscored in a series of surveys, including that of the Social Weather Stations in September. The SWS said that up to 3.8 million Filipino families or 21.5% experienced hunger at least once in the last three months. The figure ex-

ceeds the all time high of 19% recorded in February and November 2006. This raises by 10% the new average hunger incidence compared to an average of 11% in the last nine years.

Meanwhile, the latest statistics from the Department of Labor and Employment show that from 2004 to 2006, the number of layoffs in Metro Manila rose by 100% due to company closures.

The regime timed the release of the NEDA statement with the arrival of a team from the International Monetary Fund that was then conducting a review of basic economic conditions. The Arroyo government was pleased no end when the IMF declared that the Philippines came second among economies with the "best showing" in Asia. Nonetheless, the regime cannot escape the people's criticisms and loathing in the face of its brazen doctoring and deception. Even reactionary economists could no longer take the fakery. The more the regime dishes out its lies, the more it reveals its prevaricating nature. AB





## Relentless killings

The US-Arroyo regime's butchers continue to sow terror in the countryside without letup. Following are the latest reports culled by *Ang Bayan*:

**November 2.** A composite team of police and military elements arrested Ricardo Bellamia, 47, organizer of the National Federation of Labor and Kilusang Mayo Uno in Cebu, for allegedly being a member of the New People's Army. Bellamia's wife said her husband

was picked up in their house in Barangay Casay, Dalaguete, Cebu and is currently detained at the Guadalupe Police Station in Cebu City.

**November 1.** Lt. Alex Elnar of the 62nd IB seized BAYAN-Eastern Visayas spokesperson Flor Acbo in

Barangay Dos, Pinabacdao, Samar at around 4 p.m. He was brought to the 62nd IB's headquarters in Calbiga town where he was interrogated on his and BAYAN's alleged connection with the NPA for three days. He was released only after his abduction was reported to the public.

**October 26.** Arroyo henchmen killed 64-year old farmer Arturo Tolentino in his house in Samal, Bataan at 5 a.m. The henchmen introduced themselves as policemen when they forcibly entered his house ostensibly to arrest him. The "policemen" handcuffed his entire family and ordered them to lie face down on the floor as they took Tolentino out of the house. Seconds later, they heard a shot. After they were uncuffed, Tolentino's family went out and found his lifeless body leaned against a wall.

**October 24.** Elements of the AFP abducted Pedro Calilung, a market vendor organizer in Guagua, Pampanga. Calilung was last seen at 9 a.m. in the Guagua public market. Two days after his abduction, he was able to talk to one of his fellow vendors over the cellphone. The person who received his call said Calilung sounded scared and could not speak clearly. When he was asked where he was, Calilung said he was meeting with his relatives. His relatives, however, said they had not seen him and didn't know where he was.

**October 16.** Military



*Continued on "Relentless...," on page 7*



# MMDA to unleash 15,000 soldiers in demolition campaign

The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is set to unleash up to 15,000 soldiers from the National Capital Region Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP-NCR) in its stepped up demolition campaign against urban poor communities.

Thousands of families have been victimized by the violent demolition operations of the MMDA's Sidewalk Clearing Operation Group (MMDA-SCOG) these past months.

The latest victims of the MMDA-SCOG were street vendors forcibly evicted from the entrances and exits of the La Loma and Sangandaan cemeteries last October 31. Some managed to flee with their wares while others were arrested. The MMDA-SCOG seized candles, flowers and foodstuff from the vendors.

That same day, MMDA personnel demolished urban poor shanties in Barangay Katipunan, Muñoz,



Quezon City without any notice or court order.

Earlier, on October 28, an MMDA wrecking crew tore down a hundred houses in the cities of Pasay, Makati and Quezon. Using a crane, 250 elements from the MMDA-SCOG razed 60 shanties housing more than a thousand families in

Barangay 51 in Pasay and Barangays Palanan and San Isidro in Makati City. The MMDA had earlier already demolished 60 houses on August 20 in the same area. Thousands of other families living in some 200 other shanties have been given a week's notice before the MMDA comes back to demolish their homes.

Also, on October 28, forty houses were demolished along Litex Road, Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City. MMDA personnel even stole electrical wiring and water pipes from the houses they had torn down. A week before, 500 houses had been razed by the MMDA on October 21 in the cities of Navotas, Caloocan, Malabon and Valenzuela.

The MMDA has been relentlessly pursuing its demolition campaign since the start of the year. On January 5, a Moro vendor was killed and three others were seriously wounded when MMDA personnel opened fire on them in Baclaran, Parañaque. This was followed by another violent demoli-

## *"Relentless...," from page 6*

elements abducted an 8-year old girl in Tuburan, Ceby and subjected her to interrogation. The military was forcing her to admit that her parents were NPA members. Nena (not her real name) was on her way home from the Mag-alwa Elementary School when she was abducted by 78th IB troops and brought to their detachment in Barangay Gaang. To cover up their crime, the military claimed that Nena had been abandoned by her parents. Her aunt Liza Baldespinosa, who was her guardian, vehemently denied the accusation.

**September 1.** Troops from the 21st IB tortured to death Red fighter Fernan "Ka Uno" Reyes after he was captured in Barangay Balanni, Sto. Niño, Cagayan. Ka Uno was wounded in a clash between the NPA and the military that also left two soldiers dead.

The military cut off one of Ka Uno's ears and let him bleed to death. The AFP refused to surrender his remains to his family and instead used his body to bait other Red fighters. They left his decomposing body under the rain and kept a tight watch nearby. The soldiers later had no choice but to give his remains to his family after his parents and barangay officials filed a case in court.

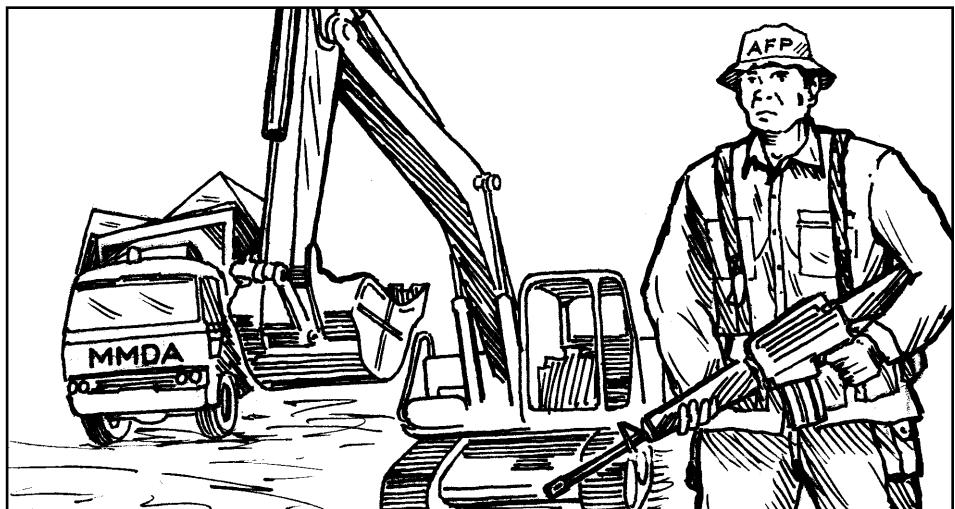
AB



tion in San Andres Bridge 1 in Paco, Manila on February 28 where the MMDA fired at the residents. Fifty-four families lost their homes.

By June, 332 families had been evicted from Baclaran. Not long after, demolitions began along North Triangle in EDSA. The demolitions have been put on hold because of protest actions by the residents.

By August, 60 urban poor shanties had been demolished along the Pasay-Makati border, while residents of more than 200 other houses were ordered to leave voluntarily lest they meet the same fate. The MMDA has also threatened to evict residents of 10 barangays along the San Juan river. By September, the MMDA had mercilessly razed 100 shanties in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City. Two hundred other shanties



are set to be demolished but have not been torn down pending negotiations with church people.

Despite the people's resistance, the MMDA under Bayani Fernando is deadset on undertaking these forcible evictions to give way to infrastructure projects for the benefit

of foreign and local businessmen. They include road- and bridge-widening projects and railroad construction, among others.

With no less than their lives at stake, urban poor residents have no other choice but to defend themselves and their basic rights. AB

## Artists decry defilement of Neo-Angono mural

The Neo-Angono Artists Collective (NAAC) and other artists decried the National Press Club's (NPC) defilement of a mural that the latter commissioned from the NAAC. The 8 ft x 32 ft mural which depicts the history of press freedom shows a man reading a newspaper in the middle of a busy street. Famous historical figures were depicted as the other characters on the street.

On the eve of the mural's inauguration, where Gloria Arroyo was to be the guest of honor, the mural was inspected by elements of the Presidential Security Group. The PSG reportedly pointed out the many "leftist marks" painted on the mural and told NPC president Roy Mabasa that they had to be removed. The NPC president asked the Neo-Angono artists to put in the changes, but the artists refused as they disagreed with the alterations. It was also past the three week period they had agreed upon to introduce any changes. The NPC president just hired another painter to make the alterations in accordance with Malacañang's wishes.

The original work's central element was a newspaper featuring a statement by the International Federation of Journalists against the Anti-Terror Law. The statement was replaced by a figure of a monster in a cage. Jose Rizal is likewise originally depicted reading a newspaper that bannered the abduction of Jonas Burgos. The headline was replaced by "Press freedom fight is on." Pictures of Jones Burgos and his mother Edita were likewise defaced.

In a rally scene, the name of the militant National Union of Journalists of the Philippines was erased from a streamer. Andres Bonifacio was also originally portrayed with his arm tattooed with the "K" of the "alibata" or ancient Philippine script on his arm. The tattoo was painted over with a heart pierced by an arrow because the original was allegedly a "Leftist symbol". Faces of anti-Arroyo personalities like Prof. Randolph David and columnist Juan Mercado were also retouched.

Critics noted the irony of the NPC's involvement in suppressing freedom of expression. AB



# Alston submits final report to UN

Prof. Philip Alston formally submitted his final report on the human rights situation in the Philippines to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on October 30. Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) conducted his investigation on the Philippines last year. Alston went on to present his 21-page report despite the presence of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who Gloria Arroyo sent in a last-ditch attempt to mitigate the report's impact.

Despite Arroyo's attempts to water down the results, Alston's final report mirrored the already publicized initial conclusions of his investigation.

The report revealed that the Philippines was among 30 countries with verified reports of extrajudicial killings. It correctly identified Oplan Bantay Laya as the framework governing the killings of progressive activists under Gloria Arroyo's six-year rule. Alston assailed the regime's practice of maliciously linking the legal mass movement to the armed revolution to justify the killings.

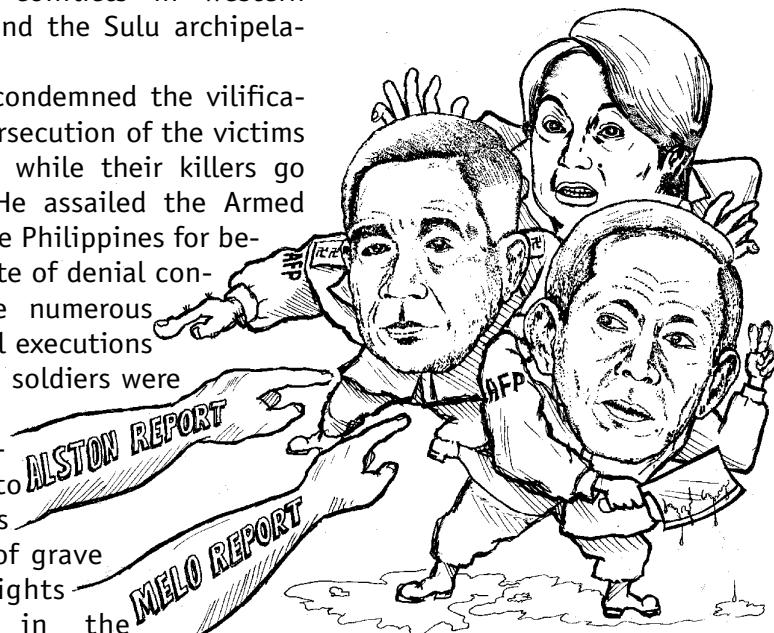
Alston also cited the growing number of journalists killed in the country, killings related to agrarian reform conflicts, the killings of

streetchildren by vigilante death squads and human rights abuses related to conflicts in western Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago.

Alston condemned the vilification and persecution of the victims themselves, while their killers go scot free. He assailed the Armed Forces of the Philippines for being in a state of denial concerning the numerous extrajudicial executions in which its soldiers were implicated.

Meanwhile, due to Alston's disclosure of grave human rights violations in the

Philippines, the US Senate on November 5 tied the grant of an additional \$2 million in economic and military to the Arroyo regime to the latter's compliance with Alston's recommendations. Alston urged, among others, that the military respect human rights and put a stop to violence against legal organizations. **AB**



## PPT condemns Dutch government for seizing documents

**S**hame on the Dutch government," stressed former Norwegian ambassador and lawyer Øystein Tveten, one of six jurors of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) who presided over the PPT's second session on the Philippines. Tveten assailed the government of The Netherlands for its police forces' confiscation of PPT documents on August 28 simultaneous with operations to arrest Prof. Jose Maria Sison of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

PPT equipment and documents were seized by Dutch police from the house of Dr. Angelica M. Gonzales, Executive Director of the PPT International Coordinating Secretariat. Dr. Gonzales' house

was raided the same day police forces barged into the NDFP International Office and five other houses of Filipino political refugees living in The Netherlands.

The international jurors never thought that the Dutch government would seize the documents which contained testimonies of witnesses against abuses committed by the Arroyo regime on the Filipino people. The PPT jurors feared that their testimonies may be used against the witnesses who testified against the Arroyo regime.

Last March, the PPT found the Arroyo government and the US guilty of massive violations of civil, political, economic and human rights. **AB**



# CPN-M demands establishment of republic in Nepal

The Nepali people's struggle against the monarchy intensified this November, as the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) succeeded in demanding from the coalition government the initiation of preparations for declaring the country a republic.

In a special session of the interim parliament last October, the majority approved a motion put forward by the communists to transform the country into a republic even before elections for a constituent assembly slated for November 22. The majority also approved a motion that would guarantee proportionate representation for parties in the constituent assembly. Nonetheless, the vote fell short of the 2/3 necessary to formally declare the country a republic.

Due to intensifying pressure from the people and the communist parties, however, the coalition government's prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala was forced to accede that Nepal is, in practice, already a republic.

The abolition of the monarchy formed part of the basis of the CPN-M's alliance with six other big political parties and its decision to join the interim parliament in 2006. Agreements were reached to elect a constituent assembly that would draft a constitution for the future republic. It was left to the constituent assembly to decide when and how the monarchy would be abolished. The interim parliament nonetheless had powers to abolish the monarchy should it meddle in the democratic processes defined by the coalition government.

Prior to this, CPN-M representatives had resigned because of

the Nepali Congress Party's (NCP) refusal to confront and address the grievances raised by the communists before parliament. The NCP is the most powerful political party within the coalition government.

The CPN-M's representatives as well as those of other sectors perceived the disregard and disdain with which they have been treated by the NCP and its allied parties. The CPN-M has urged the coalition to have parliament formally declare Nepal a full republic even before the elections due to the king's stepped up intervention in the electoral process. The

CPN-M said there was absolutely no basis for the monarchy to exist and demanded its immediate abolition. The longer the declaration is delayed, the more the monarchy would be able to reconsolidate and sow discord. The CPN-M has in fact received information that the king was planning to launch a coup d'état to oust the communists from government.

Outside parliament, democratic organizations waged protest actions to support the communists' demands. They warned that they would not recognize the results of elections for the constituent assembly should they be used by the king to remain in power.

Elections for the constituent assembly have been put off, on the CPN-M's recommendation. **AB**

## Peasants march in India

SOME 25,000 peasants launched a successful march-rally in India this October. Called Janadesh or "people's verdict," the march was joined by peasants, national minorities, farm workers, monks and their allies and launched to demand their right to land and other agricultural benefits. The marchers assailed the fact that 40% of Indians do not have land and are mired in poverty.

The protesters assailed, among others, the construction of gigantic infrastructure projects in India's countryside that would displace many peasants. Among the projects are a petrochemical plant and a shipyard that would have eaten up 8,900 hectares in eastern India. The projects have been suspended after 14 protesting peasants died in an attack by state forces in March.

The march for land rights began in October 2, with the marchers arriving in New Delhi, India's capital, on October 28 after trekking more than 325 kilometers.

The Janadesh succeeded in effecting the establishment of a land reform committee under the interior ministry. Half of its members will be composed of landless peasants and national minorities.

**AB**

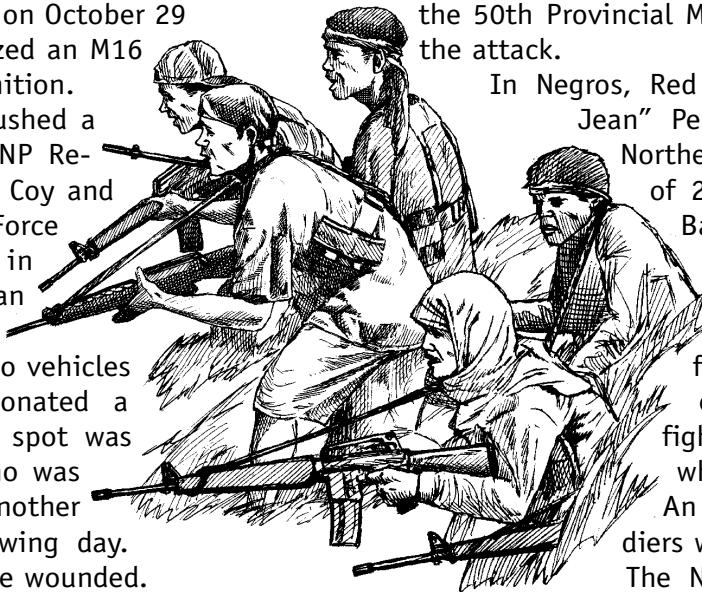
## NPA launches ambuscades in Masbate and Negros

RED fighters of the Jose Rapsing Command of the NPA in Masbate launched two successive ambuscades on police forces in the island on October 29 and 31. The guerrillas seized an M16 rifle and rounds of ammunition.

The Red fighters ambushed a composite force of the PNP Regional Mobile Group's "B" Coy and the San Pascual Police Force conducting operations in Barangay San Pedro, San Pascual on October 31.

The police were aboard two vehicles when the guerrillas detonated a land mine. Killed on the spot was P/Insp. Andres Franco who was leading the operation. Another policeman died the following day. Two other RMG troops were wounded.

Prior to this, Red fighters ambushed policemen escorting ballot boxes used in the recently held



barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections in Barangay Liong, Cataigan town. Three elements of the 50th Provincial Mobile Group were wounded in the attack.

In Negros, Red fighters of the Roselyn "Ka Jean" Pelle Command of the NPA in Northern Negros ambushed a column of 20 soldiers in Sitio Hangalay, Barangay Macasilao, Calatrava, Negros Occidental on October 22. The soldiers formed part of a four-column AFP force launching a military operation in the area. The Red fighters overpowered the soldiers who were unable to fire back. An undetermined number of soldiers were wounded in the attack.

The NPA launched the ambush to punish the operating troops for abusing and killing civilians in the area.

## AFP summarily dismisses 26 soldiers

PHILIPPINE Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano summarily dismissed 26 Scout Rangers last October 25. The soldiers were part of a 40-strong troop arrested as they were marching back to their barracks on February 19, 2006. They had been secretly detained without charges since February 2006 for allegedly supporting officers accused of staging a mutiny against the Arroyo regime that year. The soldiers were sent home and given P5,000 each without any explanation on why they were detained and slapped with a dishonorable discharge.

The 40 soldiers had been detained for more than 21 months without charges. Their detention was only made known after military officers under AFP custody informed Sen. Rodolfo Biazon about it during a visit to their detention cell. The soldiers had reportedly been shunted from one detention camp to another and were prohibited from contacting their families, friends and counsel.

The future of 14 other soldiers still in detention remains uncertain.

## Musharraf declares state of emergency in Pakistan

PAKISTANI president Pervez Musharraf declared a state of emergency on November 3 to suppress mounting resistance to his rule.

It is widely believed that Musharraf's declaration of a state of emergency was meant to preempt the Pakistani Supreme Court from nullifying his victory in presidential elections held last October 6. The Supreme Court disapproves of Musharraf wielding power simultaneously as president and chief of the Pakistani Army.

Musharraf, an army general, led a coup d'état in 1999, seizing power from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's civilian government.

The constitution has been suspended, media suppressed and state security forces given vast powers to crush dissent under the state of emergency. Thousands of Pakistanis have been arrested and detained, including leading opposition figures. Elections have also been postponed indefinitely.

In a statement, the Communist Party of Pakistan said it would resist the state of emergency and wage armed struggle against military rule.